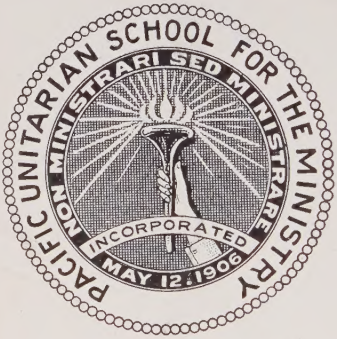
LIVING IN EARNEST

CHARLES E. ST. JOHN



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LIVING IN EARNEST

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LIVING IN EARNEST

A Book of Daily Readings

FROM THE SERMONS OF

REV. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN, D. D.

Selected by

MARTHA EVERETT ST. JOHN

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Not one year in all my past would I live
over in preference to the year
that now stretches out
before me.

JANUARY

January 1

My friends, the new year which opens to you today will offer you a great many unexpected opportunities. You can make it a blessed year, if you will begin today a career of eager watchfulness, and of ceaseless readiness to follow the right always and on the instant.

January 2

We need everywhere that note of the heroic which makes men long to achieve great things, makes them feel high emotions, and love better the toils that come with honor than the gains of selfishness.

January 3

Every moment of every day brings God's love to us and should carry our love to Him.

January 4

The doctrine of character is peculiarly worthless unless it applies to the self. It is not a standard for somebody else, but for you.

January 5

I am as well placed as my neighbor. He cannot live longer than I. We both have eternity before us.

January 6

The idle person will try in vain to be happy, for some sort of diligent work is indispensable to a fine life.

January 7

The true joy of life can come side by side with life's hardships, provided one has the thought of God, like sunshine, in his soul.

January 8

A man can be unselfish in any spot of earth, and under any conditions.

January 9

Let every person so train his faculties that life can present no emergency which he has not the power to handle.

January 10

We best perceive the Fatherhood of God when we are seeking Him with our brothers by our side.

January 11

For our eternal welfare, it is more important to be fit for a given work than to do the work itself.

January 12

We are all pupils under the great teacher, Life, and the moment of temptation is our recitation time.

January 13

Friendship is beautiful and sacred, yet every day we see men and women shutting it out of their hearts. Many live as if they were constantly seeking enemies rather than friends.

January 14

Death is only an instant. But life is long before it, and stretches out beyond it without end. Life is eternal.

January 15

We need to see that the very things we are struggling to escape from are often the agencies God is using to lift us onward.

January 16

The whole burden of the faulty world does not rest on you or me, nor is it required that we do all our work in one day.

January 17

The inefficiency of soul which poverty often causes, and which wealth does not always remove may be conquered by an earnest purpose within the soul itself.

January 18

I am content to think of heaven as a never-ceasing opportunity for us to do great things with life.

January 19

Practice is always more important than theory, and in religion love is the practice while faith and hope are the thought side of the matter.

January 20

Every man we meet has ready for us some atom of the boundless truth which we thus far have missed.

January 21

The milestones that mark the progress of the world are the lives of the men and woman who with sublime courage have persisted in trying to do the things which other persons have said could not be done.

January 22

As the shining of the sun blots out all lesser lights, so will potent trust in God crowd out of a soul all incongruous influences. Evil passion cannot live there when trust enters in.

January 23

Your actual articles of faith are those only which you succeed in living by, those which you proclaim daily in your walk and conversation.

January 24

Every true heart has its grief, or shares another's sorrow.

January 25

No other door, however hospitable, opens for us on any scene, however lovely, that can be as satisfying as the opening of the home door.

January 26

Rise yourself and humanity goes up with you. But so long as you try simply to make others better, the weight of your unsanctified presence holds them down.

January 27

Environment will control the ways of a tree, or a drifting cloud, or a bird, but there is something in a human soul that is greater than ones' surroundings.

January 28

The hour of worship ought to be your glad expression of the reverence you have previously attained amid the necessary occupations of the week, not a feeble grasping after something to correct all the rest of your life.

January 29

Life gives back to us what we put into it. To them that put in gloom, greed, selfishness and cruelty, there are returned gloom, answering greed, selfishness and cruelty.

January 30

The blows of misfortune can not reach you when your soul is in command.

January 31

The essential thing in life is to serve unselfishly some cause which with all our hearts we think to be noble.

FEBRUARY

February 1

When the mysteries are cleared, we shall see that all along law has been most truly love.

February 2

We know that growth in character is advance into eternal life. This is the way we build our immortality.

February 3

The men who lie in forgotten graves are they who were careful never to do or give more than they had to.

February 4

Every human being needs to be taught the courage that will endure a cross.

February 5

The world is full of God, and they alone feel unfriended in it who, not discovering human confidence, have also neglected to find Him.

February 6

I call no man's life-work a failure as long as he affirms that it is not yet finished.

February 7

The nobleness of faith and the grandeur of character stand or fall together, the one never of supreme worth without the other.

February 8

With Jesus we turn our hearts to the service of all the ideals that spring from our thought of God.

February 9

You can know a person's moral stature by the spirit in which he deals with his hindrances and calamities.

Any log can drift before the wind, but only a well-manned vessel can beat up against the wind and win a definite goal. So it is in the sea of life.

February 10

Only the selfish carry sorrow to utter and lasting despair.

February 11

In order to be of use to the world you must keep your wits bright, your knowledge fresh and your courage dauntless.

February 12

Property, power, knowledge, religion, all are hollow shams unless the heart is true.

February 13

Every home ought to have in it the light of heaven, the spirit of peace and love, and be beautiful to every visitor. Our homes are our harbors of refuge, the places where we can show what we should like the world to be.

February 14

The world needs men who dare to do right, not men who fear to do wrong.

February 15

There is no way by which people's imperfections of nature react upon their happiness more directly than through their daily toil.

February 16

It is better to face the future with minds governed by truth than to stumble into it as if it were all darkness and we all ignorance.

February 17

In our progress, we must go slowly; for we must take the pace set by God.

February 18

If you wish to be self-sacrificing, you will not become so by merely inventing afflictions. One might deprive himself of every pleasant thing, might burden himself with work he hated, and crucify every natural impulse of his soul without becoming any the less selfish. It would still be all for his own sake, for his own advancement, that he did these things. Self-torture is not self-sacrifice.

February 19

Brotherly love carries divine love to men, and in love is healing for all troubles and salvation from all sin.

February 20

The flesh is never weak when the ideals blaze and throb.

February 21

Prayer is the reaching out from the midst of our various troubles and duties towards the Infinite.

February 22

The way of life grows plain and beautiful to every one who is ready to accept his obligation.

February 23

Our most efficient work is done inside the sacred walls, not outside.

February 24

Christianity stands for one sublime truth upon which all other truth rests, the reality of God.

February 25

Whatever happens to me after I am dead, it will be something within the scope of the perfect love of God.

February 26

Evening closes upon us, but to the westward the day still lives and work goes on.

February 27

In the long run of an everlasting life, it makes comparatively little difference under what conditions one got his start.

February 28

Character, truth, love and faith: these are the four walls that enclose the kingdom of heaven. Outside of them who would choose to dwell?

February 29

Our entrance into Heaven, I believe, will not differ in any essential principle from our awakening on earth tomorrow morning. We shall be ourselves, know ourselves and appreciate our surroundings.

MARCH

March 1

Perfect selfsacrifice we call heroism, and sooner or later the moment for heroism comes to every man.

March 2

In the whispers of our conscience, in our ambition, in our sincerity, in our unselfishness, we are with God all the time.

March 3

He that would see afar must be a little higher up than the average — a little wiser or better. Idleness or sin may shut out the vision.

March 4

You are inexcusable if you ever miss seeing the chance to say the word that will turn a soul from evil to good, doubly inexcusable, if you fail to speak that word from your heart.

March 5

We are made for the subduing of difficulties, and must have a field for action, or our virtues will vanish away.

March 6

Faith is but our reason dealing with things that are larger than man and his earthly life.

March 7

Not the man who does most, but he that *is* most is the one who utters the eternal laws to men, and what he is depends upon his aims.

March 8

God in my soul is nearer to me than God in the Bible, or in Christ. I find Him in them because I first feel Him in myself.

March 9

Along the common pathways of toil, righteousness, happiness, piteous sorrow, sturdy endurance, and persistent thought, we should ever be marching into a higher life.

March 10

Let a man spend but five minutes a day in a reverent search for truth, and he will never lose his hold on the perfect life.

March 11

If your occupation is an honorable one, it is possible to throw yourself into it, in dead earnest, as if the salvation of mankind depended on your doing your work well.

March 12

The fear of man, or of hell, or of God never gave a single soul a firm foundation for a full, rich, courageous life of virtue.

March 13

The soul uses the body as far as it will go, and then goes jubilantly on without it.

March 14

One does not need to be very evil and selfish to shut himself out of heaven on earth. Sometimes petty meannesses and trivial jealousies and secret faults will create darkness within us as effectually as more glaring sin does.

March 15

The aim of a life must be *one*. It must be so mighty, so lovely, so intimately bound up in the thought of the Eternal God that no lesser aims can for a moment rival it.

March 16

I know of people whose life long faithfulness was of so heroic a cast that mere death came to them like a burst of sunshine after a raging tempest.

March 17

The happiness of home life rests largely upon unselfish faithfulness. There is the deep current of faithfulness between husband and wife, the slightest jar in which is a stab to the joy of the home, for faithfulness is the foundation of the home.

March 18

Only busy people can retain happy hearts, and the joy that arises from action will be intense in proportion to the earnestness of the worker and the nobleness of his aim.

March 19

The use we make of our accumulations of truth is the main thing in religion, and they who are content with merely understanding many ideas are not great of soul.

March 20

The little that we do know about God is the grandest thought we have.

March 21

I think it would be impossible to exaggerate the inspiring influence of the conviction that this life is not our last chance.

March 22

Many a man has lost rather than gained in sterling moral quality under the influence of wealth and of freedom from harsh discipline.

March 23

If, in your hearts, you trust the Almighty, you can trust still in troubled times, and so from all your wanderings emerge at last, purified and capable souls to share the work of God.

March 24

The willing soul is the one that understands you, not the man who dodges the issues of life, who is simply striving for himself.

March 25

There has been many a child ruined, fairly driven into rebellion by having "thou shalt not, thou shalt not" drummed into his ears day in and day out.

March 26

Your life is the eternal progress of your soul, and it is in your power to make it spirited and magnificent by the resolution with which you meet all its opportunities.

March 27

No soul goes astray without knowing it instantly. He who is king over himself is born to the purple.

March 28

If you would find the cheeriest, wisest, most hopeful people, those most confidant of an eternal youth, look among those who have reached a beautiful old age.

March 29

To make a man better able to cope with the difficulties of life is a truer help than to smooth over those difficulties for him.

March 30

At the end of your earthly life you will be glad if you can feel that you have not lived unto yourself in bygone years.

March 31

He who really believes that he is a son of God cannot fail to derive from that conviction a vigorous sense of personal responsibility.

April 1

A man has not felt an ideal in any vital way if he cannot project it into life.

April 2

Suffering, when it is of the voluntary, heroic, Christ-like stamp, is in reality a soul's proclamation of his faith in God.

April 3

Everyone whose soul is right within him can win blessedness out of life as he finds it.

April 4

Under the inspiration of our religion we are to do each work as for eternity.

April 5

Man is as ready for all noble growth as the earth in spring is ready for the bursting out into verdure and blossom.

April 6

Friendship is a two-fold condition, and men lack it only when they have not sought to give it.

April 7

The good man may not be at every moment happy, but certainly no one else can be.

April 8

To him who trusts God, the future is like his home. We enter it in seeming darkness, but God is our light at every step.

April 9

No one can consider himself an educated soul unless his mind is stored with faculties that stand forth in time of need or opportunity.

April 10

One might ask to what purpose the multitude of plans for doing good, if people forget the most essential thing of all, the *being* good.

April 11

A man has become a slave to his occupation if he has allowed it to crush all his thoughts of other things.

April 12

Hardship and bereavement are not punishments: they are merely sombre incidents of life, dark storm clouds overshadowing the world as a means of bestowing God's love upon men, or teaching them to read the larger bearing of that love.

April 13

Your joy is doubled when it reaches to another, and multiplied beyond measure when it spreads out into the world.

April 14

Home, business, books, amusements, — upon them all religion would throw a deeper joy if it were given the lead; but it shrivels when they stand first, and manly earnestness disappears.

April 15

Surer than the recurrent resurrection of the flowers in the springtime, more steadfast than the shining of the sun are the returns and the persistence of the divine hints which from all sources appeal to the high devotion of our souls.

April 16

To be brought into harmony with God, and to hear his will revealed again is the true answer to prayer.

April 17

If you have ever forgotten self for an hour, for one day, and lived by that standard, you will know what Jesus meant by saying that his yoke is easy.

April 18

For *you* conviction rises out of that creed alone which shines clear and accurate to your strongest thought.

April 19

All the bitterness, all the envy and all the hopelessness are taken out of life for those who believe that an Eternal Justice is in control of all things.

April 20

Spiritual greatness is open to all men. That is the very glory of the teaching of the Master.

April 21

The soul should so live as to be able to stand unmoved in case its possessions are swept away, as they will be in the valley of the shadow of death.

April 22

There is never an instant when we are apart from God; therefore, there is never an instant when we are not duty-bound.

April 23

So far as happiness can be given by the visible world, it is due more to what the soul brings to the world than to what the world reveals to the soul.

April 24

After you have unselfish love and mighty faith, the whole of your life seems different to you, because you are changed and living in earnest at last.

April 25

An avoided duty, an affliction not bravely faced, smites you as it passes and leaves a scar upon the soul.

April 26

Every person needs a thought of God distinct enough to act upon all the interests of his life, and to be his guide for thought and conduct.

April 27

Brotherly love is reciprocal. Only they who feel it can receive it.

April 28

He is worldly-minded who, whether rich or poor, prosperous or unlucky, bends his chief energies to the accumulation of money, and devotes his most constant thought to the admiration of the things he owns, or hopes to own.

April 29

Whatever truth may be in God, it is practically nothing in us until we put it into conduct and so make eternal life out of it.

April 30

Obedience to conscience is the very life of the soul.

May 1

See to it then, that your mind is right *today*, for, if it is, tomorrow will heap blessings upon you, and the next day prove a very gate of heaven.

May 2

Some people let their bodies guide them, and merely drift along at every call of their physical instincts like mosses in the sea. But true men, wakeful men, put their souls in command.

May 3

Living is not the easiest thing imaginable, but, for one who takes it rightly, it is the *best* thing imaginable.

May 4

Not even the Almighty can lead those who will not follow.

May 5

When true love binds two souls together, it is not sorrow but joy for either to give up something for the other's sake.

May 6

By every choice a man is preparing himself to be like the thing he chooses.

May 7

There is no condition of the world which we cannot turn to the highest uses, if we will confront it with sufficient moral heroism.

May 8

Death brings many changes, but it is no break in the soul's life with God.

May 9

From religion spring the mental resources, the peace, and continual hope that make old age beautiful.

May 10

The object of life is not to surpass some other person in anything, but to do the best we can with our own career, and so find our way onward along the path of eternal life.

May 11

Your church is not for yourself alone. Your home is not the castle of your selfishness.

May 12

Striving to be generous, you will find that the one gift which is always wise, always helpful, and always possible is the gift of self.

May 13

The great souls of the world have always seen a little farther than their experiments have reached.

May 14

Amid the affairs of earth, the soul without faith is like a soldier disarmed and bound.

May 15

Like the sunny fields of richest blossoms is this world with its innumerable suggestions of the Divine Presence and Love, and when we are fairly engaged in the eager search for them we lose the self amid the glories of God and His world.

May 16

In victory or defeat, the unselfish life wins a glory that never grows dim. It is the success of an immortal.

May 17

To grow into a fine brotherhood with Jesus is to begin to worship God in glad thankfulness and perfect trust.

May 18

The blessings which we devise for others and for ourselves are proportionate to the greatness of our ideals.

May 19

One great weakness with most of us is that we too often rest on our oars, stop too often to celebrate our gains, and are too ready to think that our work in life is completed.

May 20

They alone see the loveliness of the world who have a sensitive soul as well as a watchful eye.

May 21

There lives no fine and disciplined soul who has not time and again attempted the impossible in his moral growth.

May 22

It is either shame or sin or selfish aims which makes anyone wish to be alone in the pursuit of happiness.

True happiness does not suffer from being shared.

May 23

In our communion with God we shall never be misunderstood. Every impulse, every hope, every thought is clearer to the Infinite Love than it is to ourselves.

May 24

We cannot always change circumstances, but we can build character out of them, whatever they may be.

May 25

Temptations are simply the aspect the world takes when we look at it through our weaknesses, just as all things would appear green, if one looked at them through green glasses.

May 26

Our daily problem ought to be — not how we can set ourselves right with others, but rather how we can grow wiser in the power to see the best, the true in *them*. It is largely for the lack of the latter quality that we fail to have many close friends.

May 27

There is no way of fitting together voluntary selfishness and religion.

May 28

Our souls outlive all happenings, and our faith in God is the fundamental law of the thinking of our souls.

May 29

Unhappiness finds its easiest victims in those who have never acted in good earnest about any thing.

May 30

Life is rich in opportunity for every noble faculty of yours to assert itself, and for every atom of your undeveloped strength to reach out and battle with giants.

May 31

'Tis for his face that we trust a man, and trust is a look straight towards the eternal.

JUNE

June 1

Like the frequent letters from a dear friend come these days from God, each with a precious message of love, each with its possible lading of unexpected things.

June 2

There is never any dismissal from our moral responsibility. We may flout it, forget it, dishonor it, but it always holds us, and we must live out its slightest commands.

June 3

The man whose heart rings out in true answer to every principle his mind accepts is the man who in modern life is living with God.

June 4

Life seems to some persons all discord with its various interests clashing one against another; while to others it is a glorious symphony with note upon note throwing in its helpful sound.

June 5

We must have friends if we can have nothing else, but having friends we shall have oll other necessary things added to our lives.

June 6

If a man does not serve the kingdom of God for love of others more than for love of self, he has not taken the first step of the Christ-like life.

June 7

'Tis life's crosses that reveal the greatness or the weakness of human souls.

June 8

By the eternal justice, the instant a human soul does a wrong or contemptible deed, the instant he thinks a selfish thought, he is, as it were, thrown into prison. His own selfishness at once sets him somewhat apart from God, and is a bar against all true peace of mind.

June 9

Not sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice, but the unreserved gift of self when it will accomplish good, is what we want.

June 10

In the woods and fields, I can stop thinking of how things ought to be, and rest my soul in observing how things are when law holds them to the mark.

June 11

It is not labor nor hardship, but the poor spirit in which some work and live that makes them slaves.

June 12

Iron walls and opposing human wills may block our way in matters of social ambition, but whosoever will seek the things of the spirit, though he be the humblest of mortals, may start forth and march forever with the vanguard.

June 13

No thinking, no praying, no religion is worth while which does not guide you towards hope, cheerfulness, activity and progress.

June 14

It does not matter *why* the heavenward way is difficult to one who has learned to tread that way with unswerving step.

June 15

A complaining spirit is really an accusation against God, and very little thought is needed to show the ignorance underlying such a charge.

June 16

The happiest lives, those most free from discontent, are those that are full of enthusiasm, and are pressing on after ideals that never let them rest.

June 17

Like the perfect beauty which rests upon a rose that has come to its natural fulfilment of growth is the blessedness filling the heart that is kind to all the world.

They who have this blessedness are at peace with duty, are glad to be alive, are the discoverers of loveliness and order in everything.

June 18

You cannot live unhappily in a world you unselfishly love.

June 19

In touching other lives, you wish to minister to their moral growth and happiness, but not to cater to their greed or other faults.

June 20

Let the work of the world be no longer done for ourselves, or even for mankind alone, but let it be devoted to the service of God.

June 21

There are no circumstances which a man cannot face with a higher courage if religion is the conscious substratum of his life.

June 22

Prayer is the highway towards the true fulfilment of the soul's ambitions; and its answer is the attainment of the goal, a purer life, a loftier motive, a closer union with God.

June 23

Each day offers us as many opportunities for the winning of life as we are able to deal with.

June 24

In all history, the great men and heroes have been they who never grumbled about their rights, but always rushed to take the butt end of the log.

June 25

For those who really trust in God there can be no fear in their thought of Him.

June 26

The harder hours are made easy by our love for someone. And some one's love comes to us in the time of temptation or false ease and spurs us on to greater excellence.

June 27

Every man carries in his heart a vision of a better self. He will not forever be thus imperfect.

June 28

The soul may win though the body fails.

June 29

The man who gets the most out of life is he who, in the many conflicts, hardships, mysteries and sorrows of earth, attains the sweetest, truest, bravest spirit.

June 30

What the right requires, let the true man do instantly.

JULY

July 1

Leisure days may occupy almost the whole of one's life without making it at all restful.

July 2

I believe I am an eternal being because this is an idea that rings true in me whenever I utter it, or whenever I fit it to any other thought.

July 3

Man is a creature who discovers truth under the spur of necessity, and we have only to push this thought far enough to perceive that the trials and sorrows of earth are nothing but spurs that result in moral advance.

July 4

Up, then, every soul that claims a spark of courage, or any persistence of high motive, and strive daily for the true things of an immortal existence.

July 5

It is the wide outlook that gives a man intellectual self-control.

July 6

When anyone gets into the mood of decrying the present as compared with the past, and of praising none but former days, let him know that he has begun to be old, and in such a way, too, that the faults of old age are coming upon him faster than its graces.

July 7

You can detect the quality of a man's ideals by the kind of reading he habitually chooses.

July 8

Religion has not taken its vital hold on anyone until it makes him wake each morning with firmer resolutions, and pray, each nightfall, in the joy of one more victory.

July 9

The test of moral heroism is applied to every man every day of his life.

July 10

I do not often think of the sacrifices of Jesus; I think of his divinely beautiful and inspiring character.

July 11

Create eternal life in your souls, and you will understand that it cannot perish.

July 12

There are those who think they are freer than most men, and yet are slaves; slaves to their vices, slaves to their bills-of-fare and their bric-a-brac, slaves to the money they spend on idle self-indulgence.

July 13

Greatness is the being ready to act when action is needed. It is the perfect obedience of a soul to the leading of Divine Law.

July 14

So long as trifles vex you, so long as you are unable to turn commonplace things to high ends, you have not reached your throne of power.

July 15

He who aims to make the finest use of life can make time and devise means for the constant gift of self in unselfish ways.

July 16

I observe that, in the long run, the hardships, of life, so far from throwing doubt on the kindness of God, actually make men cling more closely to His sustaining Spirit.

July 17

We have no more right to speak untruths about ourselves than about others. Let every man respect himself.

July 18

The chief value of a vacation lies in the frequency with which it lifts us God-ward.

July 19

There is no better way of finding out what you can do for mankind than to study the method of Jesus. His power was the simple but irresistable power of a perfect life.

July 20

The kingdom of heaven has little to do with time here or time hereafter. It enters the souls that are ready for it at the moment of their victory in God's cause, and whether they live or die, heaven is the blessedness which their loyal deeds have won.

July 21

He who best understands the greatness of his life is the least likely to tamper with it in evil ways.

July 22

Belief in God may no longer be offered to any man as a mystery, but as the key to all mysteries.

July 23

Truth reaches the multitude by the ardent teaching of the few who receive it.

July 24

Every rebuke, to be a noble one, must carry also a clear note of expectation, for it is the greatness of your hope for a degraded soul, not the force of your denunciation, that is going to make a better man of him.

July 25

Nearly everybody works best, marches best, fights the battle of life best under a leader. So let all be wise in the choice of the hero whom they will follow.

July 26

The true friend, the trusted counsellor is never a moral scold who dilates upon every fault as if he alone could discover it, but one who knows when to keep silent, and just to stand by you with a great-hearted brotherhood, and help you to conquer the fault simply by showing you he has confidence in you.

July 27

The law of life is concerned with the soul and its ceaseless advance, and both in joy and in sadness the body should be used as the servant of that advance.

July 28

Dead leaves in the control of wind and tide are one thing, and immortal souls quite another. 'Tis only when we understand this fact that we begin to make headway.

July 29

Moral growth comes as we forget ourselves and reach out to help our brothers to be braver, truer, stronger, happier.

July 30

To win a good friend is better than to make a great stroke in business.

July 31

Unwilling working, alternating with selfish resting, is the secret of most unhappy lives, whose successive events do but emphasize their prosiness.

August 1

The Eternal One scatters his beauty along the paths of the sea with a lavishness, which, never repeated, yet outlasts the ages of earth.

August 2

It is not what you have done, but what you can now achieve that the world is anxious to know.

August 3

There are certain virtues which make the soul practically independent of the rough or smooth fortunes of its body, and equip one for noble service among men, even when he has but poor tools and humble position with which to work.

August 4

Our great ideals restrain us, incite us, guide us by the solemn warning that we may be creating this day things that are to abide in our lives forever.

August 5

I believe it is as easy for the rich as for the poor to live noble lives.

Wealth, poverty and each one of the innumerable stages of condition lying between those two extremes has each its own responsibilities, opportunities and temptations and it takes the whole strength of a soul to do the full duty of righteousness in any condition of life.

August 6

The gospel of character treats mainly of the moment and the single soul. It teaches me that I, today, need to grow better than I am.

August 7

No man or woman who nobly loves and is graciously loved can yield to despair, or become very wicked, or fail of a beautiful life.

August 8

Character, immortality, and harmony with God: these are some of the things that Jesus found to be deep and essential in human nature.

August 9

I doubt if there is any selfishness which surpasses that of the people who are always moaning that they have no friends. They can begin whenever they like to *give* friendship to someone. No friends are so dear as those for whom we toil and suffer.

August 10

When the Supreme Being who holds the worlds together is supreme in us, then our lives will be orderly and beautiful.

August 11

A soul cannot be smuggled into heaven or into goodness. You've got to win righteousness for yourself, and every moment of shirking is a nail in the coffin of your hopes.

August 12

In the moral activities and duties of the soul, I believe it is gloriously true that nothing is impossible to the determined nature.

August 13

The judgments of God face us in everything wherein we see something better than ourselves. We are brought to the judgment seat of God whenever we meet a noble character.

August 14

From dawn to twilight, and the evening hours of study, a day is full of helpfulness to those who are eager to learn.

August 15

The great question is solved when we have reformed ourselves.

August 16

If we were stronger in character, quicker of understanding and more considerate in sympathy, men would not come to us so often in vain for guidance, counsel and comfort.

August 17

In the here or the hereafter, the day will come in every man's life when he will care little about the incidents of his life because he cares so much about the privilege of doing right.

August 18

If you serve the kingdom of God, it must be in vacation and away from home as well as here.

August 19

There are many people who have not had hardships enough, and who for this reason slip through life in childlike weakness.

August 20

The thought of God is a gleam of light piercing every cloud.

August 21

An opportunity is nothing unless it is seized upon by some quick-witted soul, and the weary-hearted monotonous lives among us are those that never see their opportunities till it is too late to act.

August 22

It is a matter of the highest moment that one's chief interest in life should not be himself.

August 23

One's sense of God, one's religion will be of very slight importance and use to him, if he puts into it only a fraction of his being. Many people do thus scrimp their devotion to God.

August 24

Of all men in the world, they are least to be envied who are at the same time rich, and devoid of all intellectual moral interests. A full purse can never compensate for an empty mind.

August 25

Courage is the mood with which to endure all waiting, and sometimes it seems as if the whole of life were a waiting for something, a wishing for the day.

August 26

It must be a very thoughtless nature which has never been able to draw strength for daily service from the soul's ideals.

August 27

How insecure are the foundations of the happiness of any home where a guilty conscience hides!

August 28

It is the man of trained mind who is most faithful to trifling matters.

August 29

Every soul has the opportunity of discipline that shall make him ready for a new life, and I think that is what this life is meant to give.

August 30

We can neither think nor work without reference to the future. It is rushing in upon us with every instant.

August 31

That is life — to be ever dashing onward, led by one more partial ideal to one more gallant deed. How it throbs with joy and glory — this eternal life of ours!

SEPTEMBER

September 1

It is not so easy for us to yield to unmanly irritation or to foolish despair when our consciousness of God is rich and constant. It is the shallow stream that is vexed by pebbles.

September 2

The absence of an appreciative spirit is one of the surest indications of a deeply-rooted selfishness.

September 3

It is enough for me to understand that the wearing out of my body is by no means the wearing out of me.

September 4

Happiness cannot stay with a stationary life.

Service, not happiness, is the end of our life on earth.

September 5

Character is the chief end of education as of every thing else. No teacher is to be honored who does not quicken the growth of good character in his pupils while he is imparting knowledge.

September 6

A true man can always keep the upper hand of his work, if, from the very start, he maintains the principle that his tasks shall be done better with each succeeding day.

September 7

Business should not be the whole object of life. Nor should worldly prosperity be sought with a strained feeling that all is lost if it be not attained.

September 8

If you can learn from Jesus to expect nothing and to give everything, you are saved from all unselfishness, and will never think of yourself as wronged or slighted by the world.

September 9

In the church your highest aim can only be to serve, to be helpful, to publish abroad the kingdom of God. The true church is not simply a preacher and an audience. It is a working force, a band of men and women and children united in mutual trust for the giving out of strength. It is to give worship to God, to give inspiration to strangers and the weary and the tempted, and to give sacred truth to the world around.

September 10

To meditate long on one's failures is to cultivate self-distrust, and so undermine the moral energythat is essential for present success.

September 11

Not an hour passes without offering you some imposition to challenge, some wrong to right, some danger to conquer by facing it.

September 12

With character and God, that is to say, with courage and faith, a soul is invincible.

September 13

We seek education, money, power, fame. But, alas, these things are easily obtained and leave us tempted, heart-sick, foolish still. They are but the surface of human life, and heaven does not rest upon them.

September 14

Men with harder lives than mine have been faithful to duty, therefore I certainly can do my easier task.

September 15

Neither wealth nor learning, nor culture, nor good intentions nor toil will give you the power over the lives of those nearest to you which true love exerts. By this you can keep your home bright in the face of every deprivation and sorrow.

September 16

At all hazards and by any sacrifice, we must free ourselves from the selfishness of imagining the self to be the centre of all things, and our own work the only important thing in the world.

September 17

Half the battle of life is in knowing how to fail with an unconquered heart.

September 18

The great thought by which to discount the hardness of practical life is that we are souls, and not suffering, perishable clay merely.

September 19

One's hopes are always a true revelation of his character and present tendencies.

September 20

Let every complaining, doubting, irritated soul bring himself up with a round turn, face to face, not with the world he is worried about, but with perfection, the Ideal, God; and so, once again see himself as he is, see his faults, his hasty judgments, his personal delinquencies, over against the spotless background of the Merciful God.

September 21

A righteous, manly course may sometimes be easy, but not often.

September 22

We owe the world more than money. We owe it inspiration, good example, and the constant help of good qualities in ourselves, and may not honorably be forever struggling with debt in the matter.

September 23

It is by character that we live the whole gospel. Character is our eternal life, and it is our communion with God.

September 24

The man who always has a new grievance is not in his right mind. This world is not made up of people who are plotting to insult one another.

September 25

We are led to think that heaven will be like home because we have already discovered that home is heaven on earth.

September 26

Unselfishness nobly expressed in self sacrifice will always be the clearest mark of a beautiful life.

September 27

To the mind that can look far on beyond the anxieties of the present and the mystery of death, there are some things that cease to seem of prime importance. Such a mind will not be carried away in the scramble for popularity and for wealth and for the high positions among men. These are the sort of things for which men hurry and employ selfish means.

September 28

If you will make your nature pure and great, you can mould what lovely thing you will out of the events that come upon you. But you must be noble and you must aim high.

September 29

So far as we can sweep away the ills of life it is good, but, at their worst, they cannot overwhelm us provided we face them in unabating serenity.

September 30

We may not surrender our convictions for courtesy's sake.

OCTOBER

October 1

You may search through libraries and not find God. But, when you are living as Jesus did, caring more for man than your creed, then God is in your heart and you trust Him.

October 2

The conscience and the moral quality go along with every soul wherever it goes. The new day will be weaker for every neglect in the present.

October 3

The strong, zealous, generous-hearted church is the only human organization that gives to unselfish love its full sway.

October 4

That which is born of pain, or struck forth at white heat, or found to endure amid much tribulation is valued beyond price.

October 5

Whatever else a man may lose, if he keeps his fine ideals, he has an indestructible treasure.

October 6

No matter what it is, if anything prevents you from seeking greater goodness and larger faith, you must either learn to put it to nobler uses, or else with a brave heart banish it from your life.

October 7

The most ingenious plans for the upbuilding of mankind will amount to nothing unless they simply serve as convenient methods for bringing human personalities to bear in healing ways upon weak ones.

October 8

The knowledge of eternal life takes the mind out of its narrow ruts and makes one a cosmopolitan instead of a villager in the universe of God which reaches on forever.

October 9

We need to surrender the idea that we can specify the sort of help we or any other troubled souls need, and with noble trust watch to see what sort of help God in His wisdom provides.

October 10

What comes hard are the things that we do unwillingly, the burdens that we bear with an angry spirit because other people have caused us trouble.

October 11

God is the one power from which we can never be separated. At every turn we come against His unfailing will.

October 12

Of even the fond love of the home circle we are not sure if its trusted indications cease for a long time.

October 13

If we are strong, daring, and self-sacrificing, we shall accomplish wondrous things. If we are luke warm, we shall accomplish nothing.

October 14

He most truly owns this earth and its material treasures who has in his soul so great purity and nobleness that he can be happy and successful with or without worldly possessions.

October 15

Whosoever understands that he cannot die feels that it is worth while to be born, no matter where he is born, no matter what the hardships.

October 16

Once begin to think, and you must have God to trust, God in whom live forever the truths that you discover.

October 17

People are sometimes selfish in trying to be good. They shun the world in fear of contamination.

October 18

Knowledge and skill cannot be crowded into us. We must voluntarily acquire them for ourselves.

October 19

Put each success out of the mind as soon as it is planted in the world, and push right on to grapple with the next duty that stands in the way.

October 20

It is goodness that knits souls together in the friendships that endure through trial, sorrow and death.

October 21

From the spot where we stand, all the laws of eternity can be felt, and out of the things we are doing today the everlasting future will develop.

October 22

Sin is the intentional neglect of our highest moral ideals.

October 23

When the solemn purpose of being loyal to God holds you, you cannot seek a selfish end, or dream that it is more important to be happy than to be noble, or think that a man may sin "this once" without harm.

October 24

The law of the Christian life is — every soul shall give. You shall give of your possessions, you shall give of your time, your personal qualities, your moral self for the good of the world.

October 25

If you would like to know the joy of living in all its glory, then build your foundation deep in character, and put into life each day the ideals you most admire.

October 26

The sincere people are the main stay of the world.

October 27

It is work of body and mind that makes man God-like, for by work alone can we wield the forces of nature and utilize the wealth she scatters everywhere.

October 28

Day after day, your thought of God impels you to see your life in its true colors. How futile grow the poor excuses with which you solaced yourself in the earlier days of blindness!

October 29

Do not be satisfied with little aims. Rather seize upon heaven by your thoughts.

October 30

Poverty stricken, indeed, is the home in which there is nothing to suggest prayer or reverence or joy or hope.

October 31

Religion holds the entire life in touch with God, and it places upon us a duty from which there is no honorable release, — the duty of carrying truth, hope and belief to others.

NOVEMBER

November 1

'Tis for *everybody* that the universe labors and makes a new day. Some of us will scorn it, miss its beauty, neglect its love; but some, thank God, will receive it gratefully, and patiently win from it all those gracious, exalted things.

November 2

By the grace of God, the difficulties are pressing upon us at every point and all the time, and we cannot avoid the conflict with them.

November 3

He who is accustomed to deceive others will surely deceive himself in the more weighty decisions of life.

November 4

We shall have to begin our spiritual life with the amount of spiritual strength we have at the end of the life of earth, and, if any person goes to it in utter destituton of the faculties it demands, he will find that it matters very little that he had filled his barns with plenteous treasures during the days of the body.

November 5

Your very sense of independence comes of your dependence upon the trustworthy God.

November 6

You must not merely love your friend, not merely appreciate him, not merely respect him, but you must do all these three in order to make of him a permanent friend.

November 7

A man's life reveals his character more accurately than a mirror pictures his face.

November 8

I learn to trust God while he is trusting my weak nature to encounter the hardest trials of life.

November 9

The ceaseless miracle of life is that in the matters of personal influence the effect is far greater than the cause.

November 10

The multitudes of self-sacrificing deaths which stand in the records of time as perennial beacons of glory give abundant witness to the fact that there are a thousand things which high-minded men and women love more than they do themselves.

November 11

No one whose life is honorable, whose aims are good is ever called upon to feel humble in the presence of any human being.

November 12

When pure and mighty hopes are well in command of a man, he can be left to settle his own problems.

November 13

If the badges and uniforms of the causes that come and go again are worthy to be worn, why is it not an infinitely greater joy to wear upon your forehead the name of God.

November 14

For me the glory of living comes from moral earnestness.

November 15

The wise father is he who requires many difficult things from his children, yet is tenderly considerate towards them when they fall short of his hopes.

November 16

Persistence through long years of labor and through repeated failures is the basis of sterling character.

November 17

With a belief in immortality we are dauntless: without it, we are easily conquered.

November 18

The essence of good conduct is to have a pure ideal, and to stand by it without fear or disloyalty.

November 19

Whatever wealth may bring to its possessors in the way of return for great ability, there is one thing it cannot do. It cannot create ability and manliness, which after all are the real ends of living.

November 20

We have not yet done the perfect thing, and God keeps the vision of that triumph ever before our souls to be our inspiration.

November 21

Few persons are injured by praise given them for the faithful performance of duty.

November 22

The act of achieving is worth measurelessly more than the thing achieved, and what others do for us is nothing compared with what we do for ourselves when imperishable things of the soul are to the front.

November 23

In this life and the next, character is the chief thing, to the cultivation of which God has set all the other forces of our natures and of the universe.

November 24

Whenever lovers, or husbands and wives find a flaw in their happiness it is because one of them loves himself more than he does his mate. That is, *true* love is wanting.

November 25

The peace of heart that comes with the appreciation of spiritual things can not fail you amid any sorrows of earth, but will abide unto the eternal life.

November 26

No mere protection, even though it were divine, could produce a moral strengthening of human nature.

November 27

Give a man high aims and a God to trust, and life begins anew for him.

November 28

The hero does not lie. Yet how many are the times when we are tempted to falsify just a little.

November 29

Study diligently the biographies of other men, but read your own history in your reserves, in the deeds you are yet to do.

November 30

A willingness of spirit, a quickness to learn the meaning of the threats of nature saves one from the repetition of many a harsh lesson.

DECEMBER

December 1

The gate of heaven, of the perfect life stands open to all. It is built of toil, sorrow, deferred hope, tortures and hindrances, and the benediction of our God rests upon him who fights his way through.

December 2

Some people spend their whole life in avoiding the education they need.

The hardest tasks that face us may speak the sweetest message from God and lift us farthest on our way.

December 3

Self-forgetfulness is sensible economy of attention. When thinking about a great thing, put your whole mind upon it that you may miss no part of its joy or its secret because your little self has suddenly pulled you down from the vision.

December 4

The important decisions of life are not made for us.

December 5

Every person who is unhappy or discontented in any small or selfish way will find that he as yet has never loved his brother or fully trusted the Eternal God.

December 6

He who sells his soul goes all adrift for the virtues a man has are the only firm standing ground for an active or a peaceful life.

December 7

Our ideals have more strength, more of eternity in them than have most of the things of daily life which at the first glance may seem more practical.

December 8

There is no moment in life when one is not greatly helped by remembering his personal tie to God.

December 9

Beyond a doubt every day of our life is worth living, gloriously worth living, because it is possible for us each day to gain a little more of virtue and knowledge.

December 10

There is no good work which we ought to call impossible until we ourselves have tried it and failed after heroic effort, and even then we can not be sure it is impossible. For it is more likely to be true that we were lacking in patience, strength and faith.

December 11

Noble is that church in which the unselfish doers of the word outnumber those who are hearers and receivers only.

December 12

Every time we reach out towards the Unknown, we shall transform it into the Known, each last prayer of our heart bringing to us the ever richer, nobler idea of God.

December 13

I do not believe that any worthy occupation is commonplace except as our ignorance and unfaithfulness make it so: for there is no work at which noble natures have not won the crown of a righteous life.

December 14

Heroism comes in when a man generously exceeds his obligations, and rises to the noble level of working right on in life's duties after the strain of compulsion is taken off.

When necessity ceases to bind, are you hero enough to be noble and active still?

December 15

Some there are who trample pearls under their feet and make of a day only a fretful, empty miserable thing.

December 16

The corner stone of the Christian gospel is that, whatever else may be omitted from a life, character can not.

December 17

He who works with God will not make one careless stroke.

December 18

We can not see our souls, we can not see the future, we can not see what is after death. But why should we care to see? The things which are seen are temporal.

December 19

So to live that no sudden revelation can ever put one to shame is heaven.

December 20

Make your ideal of righteousness beautiful enough, pure enough, great enough, and it emerges into a knowledge of God.

December 21

Unless a man is honest with himself, his religious life will be the sheerest hypocricy.

December 22

When God sends us, shall we not with dauntless spirit accept the hardest places, and endure the lowliest privations, and leave our bodies in unnamed graves, while our mind is set on making a good cause succeed?

December 23

There is nothing else in the thought of the world so important and so far reaching as these two truths of Jesus — that love is the true guide of conduct and that the loving God is over all.

December 24

The message of every Christimas gift is the same, the message of love. Cold must the heart be which is not deeply moved by such holy messengers.

December 25

The influence of that brave, pure earnestness of Jesus reaches over all the years, and works among us today, when we nerve ourselves for work as fine as his. Noble personality feels no bounds of time or space.

December 26

With an everlasting future before us, there is time enough for all those things that need to be done — provided one wastes no time in doing foolish things, and spoils no hour by blind hurry.

December 27

We shall not miss God, nor God's wish for us if we are waiting for Him with loyal hearts.

December 28

The body will wear out at last, and the shoulders bend from the weight of years, but for all that, the life which is enclosed there has only begun its course.

December 29

Although the storm clouds hang low over this earth of ours, over them all is light.

December 30

My personal sense of the personal God grows stronger as my mind moves on, for the whole world, the whole of life seems but a magic covering that reveals the pulsing of a mighty life beneath.

December 31

A whole life may be lived in a year, and the world set into new channels of growth.

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